servants is set aside at the expense of the tara-
vad to entertain these men when they visit their
wives, sometimes for two or three days at a
time.

The buildings and courtyard are surrounded
by a shady garden of coconut, jackfruit, cashew
nut and mango trees. Chiefs and village head-
men have a private bathing pool with stone steps
running round it in their own garden; retainer
[56] Nayars more often bathe in the large public
bathing pools attached to the temples and re-
served for "clean" castes of the village. Men
and women bathe and swim daily in public clad
in a loin-cloth, on opposite sides of the pool.
Both boys and girls become excellent swimmers
and divers almost as soon as they can walk.

In the southeast corner of the garden is an
open space set aside as the group's cremation
ground, while at another corner is a dense shrub-
bery devoted to the snake-gods of the group, in
which small stone images of cobras are set up.

The property-group was traditionally a cor-
porate group in other sense than those in which
this term applied to the lineage. Whereas the
lineage was held responsible in cases of offence
against religious law (sins, or crimes against
the village community), the property-group was
responsible in cases of debt or theft (torts).
The headman, on behalf of the group, must make
restitution for such offences from the group's
jointly owned funds. In addition, as represen-
tative of the group in the assembly, he must pay
annual dues to the temple funds. Through its
headman, the group also acted as a single legal
personality in the payment of wages to its

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
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mal segment of one mother and her children within the property group. Each property group usually had a separate garden name in addition to its lineage name.

Residence Among retainer Nayars of this area a property group usually owned only one homestead and was simultaneously a dwelling group. Occasionally among retainers, however, and more commonly among chiefs and village headmen, a property group which increased in size might build two or more homesteads on its lands. If the houses were adjacent they were usually occupied indiscriminately by members and cooking was done only in one. If the homesteads were some distance apart each might be occupied by a minimal segment of the group. The kāranavan would manage the resources of the whole group but would allocate provisions separately to each household. Separate cooking would be carried on.

Spouses lived separately in their natal units, with the husband visiting the wife. We shall call this type of residence *duolocal*.

A traditional homestead of retainer or village headman's rank centered about a large main building with two stories, separate staircases for men and women, and, in the middle of the building, a small courtyard open to the sky. The house faced east, and was fronted by a spacious veranda, used normally by men of the group and their male visitors. Within, a passage led to the central courtyard, round which rooms opened off on three sides. They included an ancestor shrine; several storerooms containing clothing in boxes, metal vessels, jewelry, weapons, and paddy (unhusked rice) in large wooden chests; one or more rooms for everyday use, each with sleeping mats, a bench, wooden stools and chests, and a rope to hang clothes; and a small room occupied by women during their delivery and menstrual seclusions. A roofed cloister with pillars ran between the open courtyard and the rooms. Beyond the courtyard to the west was a long, narrow dining hall with a large kitchen behind it. Behind this lay the back veranda, normally used only by women and children. Upstairs might be four or five bedrooms in which women received their husbands. Men born into the group seldom entered these upstairs rooms and were forbidden to use the women's staircase.

Outside the house in the outer courtyard a separate building served as a granary for paddy. The upstairs of this building was often set aside for the kāranavan's use. Here he slept, was served with food by women of the house, entertained co-villagers, and kept records of the group's economic transactions. If the group was large a second separate building was often reserved to junior men for reading, en-

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
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tertaining friends, or sleeping when they were not visiting their wives. A cowshed a few yards from the residential buildings completed the arrangements in a normal retainer homestead. In village headmen's and chiefly households whose women often had Brahman husbands a separate building with its own kitchen was set aside to entertain the men when they visited their wives.

The buildings and outer courtyard were surrounded by a shady garden of coconut, jack, cashew, and mango trees. Chiefs and village headmen had a private bathing pool with stone steps round it in their own gardens. Retainers more often bathed in the large public bathing pools attached to the temples and reserved for "clean" castes of the village. Men and women bathed and swam daily on opposite sides of the pool.

In the southwest corner of the garden an open space was set aside as the property group's cremation ground, entered only at funerals. In another corner was a dense shrubbery devoted to the snake gods of the group. Offerings were made there to small stone images of cobras, and if real cobras appeared they were regarded as manifestations of these deities.

A high bamboo fence surrounded the whole establishment. It was entered through a wooden gatehouse within which armed men might sit on guard in time of war.

Economic Activities The property group obtained almost all of its subsistence from garden and paddy lands held on tenure from the village landlord and cultivated by Tiyyar sub-tenants or by Pulaya serfs. The property group surrendered part of its produce in kind as dues to the landlord. It retained part for maintenance, stored part for repayment to its serfs as daily subsistence, and gave portions twice annually to the village servant households. Tiyyar tenants retained enough for their own needs, but gave the bulk of their produce to their Nayar masters. Increasingly during the period of European trade the property group also sold spices and coconuts to Muslim middlemen in exchange for cash or cloth. The cash was used to buy brass and silver vessels, gold ornaments and jewelry, and other luxury goods from the towns. The property group gave some cloth to its serfs and tenants at festivals once a year.

The kāranavan managed all these transactions and controlled the group's estate. He might allocate specific tasks of management to juniors, but no payment was made on behalf of the group, no crops were sold, and no goods were consumed without his consent. Junior men serving in the king's wars received small daily cash sums on an

5:Mehra E-5 (no date) 1956 AWll Kerala AWll
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is surrounded by a series of concentric circles as it were, on the outside is a wide road where fairs are held and much commerce goes on on festive days. The low castes cannot go beyond this outer fringe. Lodged within, is the garden where the snakes are to be seen in their natural habitat. In this area is a sacred tank, the water of which is rather dirty due to falling vegetation, but which is reputed to be medicinal in property. Here too is a very large vessel into which milk is poured by the priest so that the snakes might be well fed. Within this belt of vegetation and bushes is the shrine itself. There is a verandah with a central hall called *mandapa* with an open space in front, and in the centre is the platform where the snake deities are enshrined. There are two images here, one of Nag Raj with five heads and the other of a serpent with only one head. This is the inner sanctuary where only the priest enters. In Manarsalil temple a virgin priestess conducts the most sacred rites and is considered to be the guardian of the serpents.

A similar position pertains among the Meitheis of Manipur, where a priestess looks after the serpent god called Pak-hangba.[5] Near the verandah is a sacred well from which water is drawn as offering to the deities and is afterwards distributed to the devotees as holy water. It is believed that only pious people can see the snakes in the forest and the wicked cannot. The devotee considers himself blessed if he is able to catch a glimpse of the snake while on his way to the temple.

The common private snake shrine in Travancore lies within the compound of the house, often near the boundary, and away from the main building, in order to best preserve its sanctity and to avoid accidental pollution by inadvertent trespass by some members of the family. The abode of the snake god is called *sarpa kavu*, and this is usually a raised patch of land surrounded by bushes and trees. In the foliage there must be a plant yielding milky sap and in the absence of such a plant, one is planted near the shrine. The trees near the shrine are never cut and the area in the vicinity of the *sarpa kavu* is kept very clean. Often granite images of many-headed snakes with spreading

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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the couch on which the Nâyar has his oil bath. The surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat.* Lying on her back, her head is raised and the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling, by way of support. The child is received by a woman of the barber caste."

DEATH AND SUCCEEDING CEREMONIES.

When the dying person is about to embark for that bourne from which no traveller returns, when the breath is about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of a leaf or two of the tulsi plant, into his mouth, holding in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring; the idea being that the water should touch gold ere it enters the mouth of the person who is dying. If the Taravâd is rich enough to afford it, a small gold coin, (a Râsi fanam, if one can be procured †) is placed in the mouth, and the lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the corpse is removed from the cot or bed, and carried to the vatakkini (a room in the northern end of the house) where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on the floor; and while it is in this room, whether by day or by night, a lamp is kept burning, and one member of the Taravâd holds the head in his lap and another the feet in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take a farewell look at the dead.

As the Malayâlis believe that disposal of a corpse by cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of senior members of a Taravâd, male or female, are burned; those of children under two are buried; so too are the bodies of all persons who have died of cholera or small-pox.‡ When preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house if there is one (there always is

* Every Nâyar, and for the matter of that, every Malayali, has an oil bath about once a week or as often as he can afford. The person is well shampooed with gingelly oil.

† These are now rare.

‡ It is the same amongst the Khonds of Ganjam.

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613
[351] in the larger houses), and, if there is not, is taken to the front yard where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandalwood paste and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is then done what is called the Pota-vekkuka ceremony or placing new cotton cloths (kóti mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the (deceased's) Taravâd followed by all the other members, also sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are used for tying up the corpse when being taken to the place of burial or cremation. In some parts [184] of Malabar the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is carried (well covered in the cloths) by hand. In either [204] case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is removed there is done another ceremony called Para Virakkuka (filling up pâras—a pâra is a measure nearly as big as a gallon). All adult male members of the Taravâd take part in it under the direction of a man of the Atikkurissi clan (who occupies the position of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen days, receiving as his perquisite all the rice and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit). It consists in filling up three pâra measures with paddy, and one edangâli ($\frac{1}{10}$ of a pâra) with raw rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a (burning) lamp of the kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela villâku. If the Taravâd is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the corpse before removal for cremation.

As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long stumps of the plantain tree, one at each end, one in the middle; on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The whole, or at least a part of the wood used should be that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age (junior) to the deceased, tears from one of the new cloths laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his waist, ties it round his waist, and holds in his hand, or tucks into his cloth at the waist a piece of iron, generally a

* The eldest male member of the Malabar Taravâd is called the Kâranavan, as noted already (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1); all male members, brothers, nephews and so on, who are junior to him are called Anandravans of the Taravâd.

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and deification of ancestors, worship of snakes and kites, ceremonies connected therewith, sacrifice, magic, witchcraft and sorcery—together with the purest form of Vêdic Brâhmanism known in Southern India, of which there is the highest expression in the temples attached to the wealthy Nambûtiri Illams, to which the Nâyar goes daily to pray, to purify his mind after having purified his body by bathing. There is very little to be seen of prayer in Southern India outside Malabar. The great mass of the people (I exclude the Brâhmans, a very minute percentage of the whole) never dream of going to a temple daily to pray; in fact prayer for its own sake scarcely exists. People go in crowds to a temple on the occasion of a festival to make obeisance to the god, and in a vague way to pray, or they will go to fulfil a vow; but going merely to pray by way of self purification of spirit is certainly rare, for this denotes a phase of religion to which the great mass of the people of Southern India has not reached.

Far away in, as it may be said, rural Malabar, I witnessed the ceremony in which the Velichchappâd exhibited his quality. It was in the courtyard of a Nâyar house, to which thronged all the neighbours (Nâyars), men and pretty women, boys and girls. The ceremony lasts about an hour. The Nâyar said it was the custom in his family to have it done once a year, but could give no account of how the custom had originated: most probably in a vow; some ancestor having vowed that if such or such benefit be received, he will for ever after have an annual performance of this ceremony in his house. It involved some expenditure, as the Velichchappâd had to be paid, and the neighbours had to be fed. Somewhere about the middle of the little courtyard, always as clean as a dinner table, the Velichchappâd placed a lamp (of the Malabar pattern) having a lighted wick, a kalasam, which he had prepared, some flowers, camphor, saffron and other paraphernalia. Bhagavati was the deity invoked, and the business involved offering flowers, and waving a lighted wick around the kalasam. The Velichchappâd's movements became quicker, and suddenly seizing the sword he ran round the courtyard (*against* the sun, as the sailors say) shouting wildly. He is under the influence of the deity who has been induced into him, and he gives oracular utterance to the deity's commands. What he said I know not, and no one else seemed to know or care in the least, much interested though they were in the

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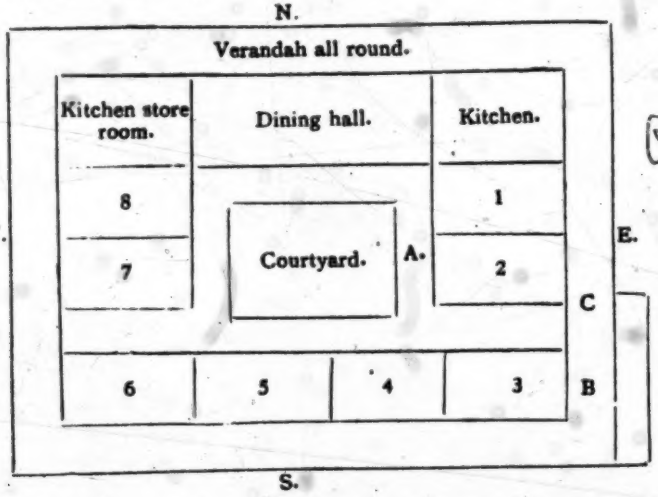
564
for him by the Tîyan at Uchâl. I recollect a case of 262
murder which arose out of nothing more or less than a 466
Tîyan tenant's refusal to present his Nâyar landlord with 241
a Pâla Ata at Uchâl. I once tried to preserve one of these cakes, but the results were too disastrous for description.*

HABITATIONS.

A house may face east or west; never north or south. 342
As a rule the Nâyar's house faces the east. Every [351]
garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, as in the case of of the poorest houses a small portico, or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this; there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the Nâyars. The following is a plan of a nâlupura or four- 342
sided house, which may be taken as representative of the 556
houses of the rich:



[778]

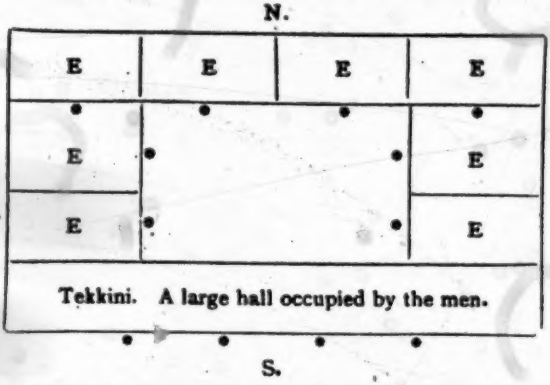
Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms which are used generally for storing grain.

At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper story occupied by the female members of the family. At B is a staircase to the rooms of the upper story

*For much of the information regarding Uchâl I am indebted to Mr. M. Raman Menon. [115]

342
55 occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portions allotted to the men and that of the [769] women. No. 8 is for the family gods. The Kârnavans [778] and old women of the family are perpetuated in images [735] of gold or silver, or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, [782] who cannot afford to make these images, substitute simply a stone. Offerings are made to these images (or to the stones) at every full moon. The throat of a fowl will be cut outside, and the bird is then taken inside and offered.

The entrance is at C.



Windows at
E. Rooms occupied by women and children.

It may be noticed that the apartment, where the men sleep, has no windows on the side of the house which is occupied by the women. The latter are relatively free from control by the men as to who may visit them. We saw, when speaking of funeral ceremonies, that a house was supposed to have a central courtyard; and of course it has this only when there are four sides to the house. The nâlupura, or four-sided house, is the proper one for in this alone can all ceremonial be observed in orthodox fashion. But it is not the ordinary Nâyar's house that one sees all over Malabar. The ordinary house is, roughly, of the shape here indicated. Invariably there is an upper story. There are no doors but only a few tiny windows opening to the west. Men sleep in one end, women in the other, each having their own staircase. Around the house there is always shade from many trees and palms. Every house is in its own seclusion.

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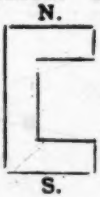

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8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

264 626 564 was in a state of terrible fury. It was only with great trouble that they were persuaded not to excommunicate the poor man.

621 178 The Nāyar life and customs can be rightly understood only in the light of their village organisation. The enormous influence the opinion of the village has in all matters connected with their social, as well as their family, life is the main reason of the persistence of the Nāyars as a vigorous and healthy community in spite of strong economic pressure, merciless competition and fast changing conditions. It is also due to this system of organised life that the customs of sexual relationship and marriage, which look so loose and immoral on paper, are found actually to be decent and tolerable. The Nāyar community is not more immoral than any other community in the world. The restraining influence among them does not come from actual written law, as among the Hindus of other parts of India, or from a belief in any social philosophy present in the mind of at least the leaders of thought. It comes from the strong feeling of social propriety which the village has developed to a very high degree.

III.—FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE NĀYARS.

613 [425] The Nāyar family consists of all the descendants from the same ancestress, counting relationship exclusively from the side of the mother. Theoretically it may contain all those who have a common ancestry of this kind, but, in practice, when families grow unwieldy, they divide the common property and live under different roofs. Ordinary families consist of relations four or five degrees removed. The numerical strength of the family varies. In old and aristocratic families one finds sometimes fifty to eighty people, though one or two families can be mentioned in Malabar which contain one hundred and fifty to two hundred people.

The undivided family generally lives under the same roof. In the house itself only the females live, while the male members of the family occupy rooms set apart for them, or, if they are rich, live in houses in neighbouring compounds. The Nāyar 351 613 house has always a large piece of enclosed ground in front of it, which is called *Muttam*. Often it is used as an ornamental garden, and no man of the lower caste may enter it. There the children walk about and play in daytime, and the women have their dance and general merriment in the evening. Behind the house is a vegetable garden and a bathing tank, which is reserved exclusively for women. [563] The dominant idea in the arrangement of the house is the proper separation of sexes in the family.

613 421 [179] The family owns property in common. What a private individual earns belongs to him exclusively, but when he dies it is joined to the rest of the family, according to the old Nāyar law which is still prevalent in some parts.[1] When the

[1] Legal tendency has been to modify this practice.

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361 564 **Habitations.** The Nayars, like other Malayali Hindus, are not lovers of towns, but generally live in detached houses, with large compounds and good gardens. The strict customs of caste purity and impurity in former times made them desert places where they were liable to be polluted by the members of very low castes. They generally select the site of a house either on the margin of a fertile valley or ravine with bright green fields of rice in front. The entrance to their compounds, which are often somewhat raised off the ground by laterite or mud walls, is at some little distance from the main house, and consists of a door in the centre of a strong gate-way, which is the first that attracts one's attention as the dwelling is approached. The gate is quaintly constructed, and the surroundings are exceptionally neat and tidy. It is also essential that a stair or a ladder should lead up to it from the bank of a green level paddy flat, reminding one of the days when security of life and property depended upon one's own ability to laugh a seige to scorn; when a Nayar house was his castle, and when at the gate-way were posted retainers to keep watch and ward against enemies. Seats for them to rest on, right and left, both outside and inside, a solid quaintly carved door and lintel, a room above approached by a ladder from inside, with windows, or openings whence shots were discharged on lawless intruders, and finally a thatched roof, complete the characterstics of a gate house. Permission to build such a gate house was a rare privilege and had to be obtained from the rulers, but with a change in the old order of things, this restriction has, like many others of the kind, ceased to exist. The plan and other details of the structure of a Nayar house are determined in strict conformity with the principles of the ancient Hindu science of architecture based on astrology.[1] A compound or garden is first selected and measured out into a square plot and is then divided into four parts by imaginary lines running lengthwise and breadthwise through the centre or middle of it. Either the north-east or south-west portion is chosen for the site of a house, the former being preferred to the latter. The south-east corner is generally set apart as the family burial-ground. There are again special spots selected for the well, tank, cow-shed, serpent grove and the family deity. The selection of the site for the house is

1. Chandrika.

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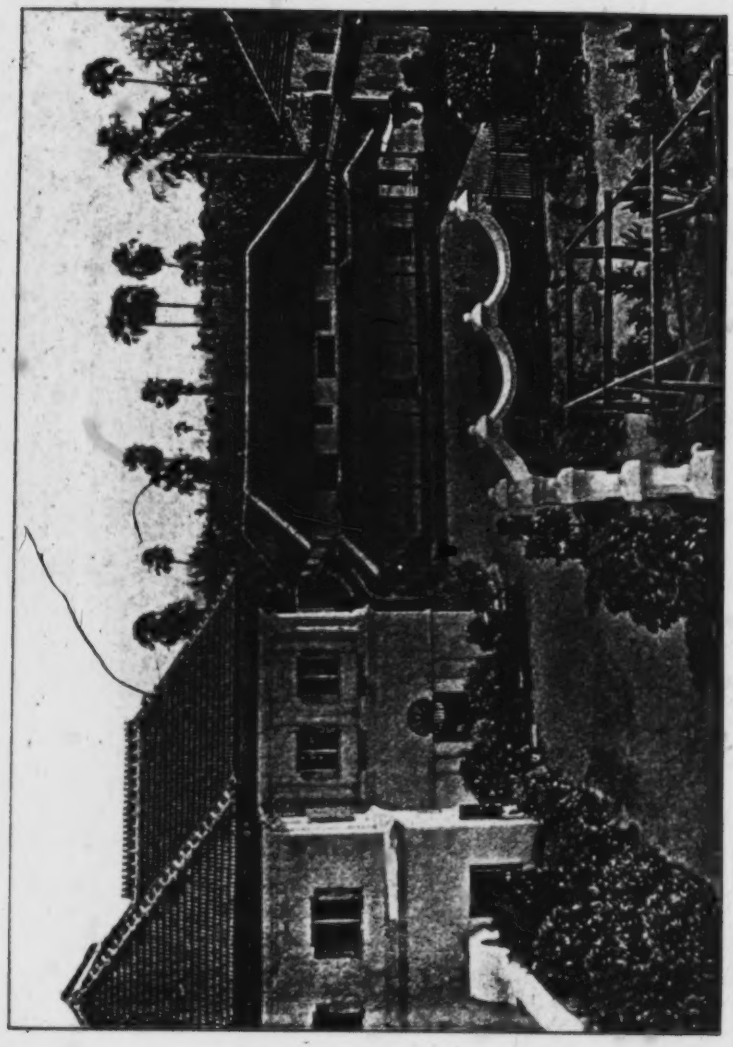

A TYPICAL ARISTOCRATIC NAYAR HOUSE.

[facing p. 8]

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partly guided by the influence of the monsoon. In regard to the serpent grove or religious shrine, a square plot just in the middle of the south-west portion is considered the most auspicious. A typical Nayar house is quadrangular, with an open space (*mittam*) in the centre; the western portion of it is the granary, while the rest of it is partitioned into rooms. The northern portion comprises the store-room and the kitchen at the western and the eastern extremities, with the dining room in the middle, while the western and eastern portions are kept as open halls for gatherings on important occasions. The house so constructed must face the rising sun—the east—and yet rather inconsistently it is called the *patinjattupura* or the western roof or building. The reason of this is that the *patinjattu muri*—the central chamber or the honoured guest chamber in the house, sanctuary of the ancestors of its occupants—must be so placed as to admit of entrance through its doorway the sun's earliest rays. Behind one or more of the rooms above mentioned is a *chaippu* forming a kind of enclosed verandah room. Another type most commonly met with consists of a portico serving as a reception-hall, the other portions of the building corresponding in details, more or less, with the quadrangular edifice just described. The rigid adherence to the science of architecture is confined not only to the Nayars and other high caste-men, but also to the generality of the Native Christians and Mahomedans who, before construction, always consult some expert in the choice of a proper site and the formation of a ground plan of the house. Misfortunes or even calamities are often attributed to the violation of these principles, and very often a newly built house is either altered to remedy the defects or even pulled down. There are again houses, where the two types are combined. The huts of the poor classes consist generally of one or two small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms with a kitchen at one end, and a verandah either in front or on all sides of the main building. With the increase of population, and with the demand for more houses, the old notions and *sastraic* injunctions are being overlooked as a matter of necessity, and the old fashioned houses are displaced by those erected on sound sanitary principles. The wood-work of the buildings is solid and substantial, and is in some cases beautifully carved. The walls are generally of laterite, brick or mud, and roofs which till

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342 recently were thatched are now being tiled with tiles of European pattern manufactured either locally or in Mangalore.
342 In these days of comparative peace and security of life and
178 property from marauders and free-booters, the necessity for massive structures has ceased to exist, and, coupled with this, the improved notions of architecture, derived from an easy intercourse with more civilised centres, the rapid progress of education, and with it a better knowledge of, and regard for, sanitation and hygiene, have wrought remarkable changes in the construction of buildings, so that a better class of houses, well built, airy, and commodious, is displacing the old ones with their small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms.

351 As part of the surroundings of the dwellings in the same
[343] compound, there are frequently seen a cattle shed, an excavated
[312] tank for bathing purposes, often full of fish and water lilies, a
[515] well so arranged as to admit of water being drawn directly from
[574] it to the kitchen, an out-house *(matam)* for the Brahman
[343] travellers or visitors, and, lastly, a small edifice for the family
[245] deity. The gardens surrounding the houses are adorned with mango and jack trees, immense bananas, groves of cocoanut and areca palms and various kinds of flowers. Thus, in most places, their houses, which are occupied by fine types of humanity, (well made men and shapely women), are situated beneath the grateful shade of magnificent avenues of trees.

356 Four hundred years ago, a Portuguese traveller, writing
[175] on the subject, remarks upon the Nayar houses as being scrupulously clean and neat. Without any exaggeration it may be said that they are proverbially so, and the women are either naturally endowed with a taste, or are trained from early child-
352 hood, to keep the houses and everything therein neat and clean.
[356] Those of the richer and middle classes are in these days fur-
[177] nished with articles of European manufacture, and all their domestic utensils, for daily use, are made either of bell-metal, copper or brass, all well cleaned and washed early every morning.

415 The furniture of the poorer classes is very simple; a metal
352 pot with a spout, a few metal plates and saucers, a few metal
412 pans of different sizes, a spitoon of brass, a few mats, a knife,
184 a cot or two, a betel box, and a few wooden bins for grains, are nearly all the requirements of a household in this respect.

342 The house itself is called by several names according to
564 the occupant's caste, that of an ordinary Nayar being a *veedu*

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or *bhavanam*, while the man in authority dwells in an *idam*, and the Raja in a *kovilakam* or *kottaram*. A separate name for each *tarawad* or family is peculiar to this coast.

There are some superstitious beliefs entertained by the Nayars as well as other high caste-men, in the selection of the site for a house and compound, the quality of the soil, the site of the tank, well, cow-shed, and the edifice for the family deity; and as an account of these will be of some ethnographic interest, it is given below:—

The best site should abound with milky trees full of fruits and flowers; its boundary should be of a quadrangular form, level and smooth with a sloping declivity towards the east, producing a hard sound with a stream running from left to right, of an agreeable odour, fertile, and of an uniform colour, containing a great quantity of soil, producing water when dug to the height of a man's arm raised above his head, and situated in a region of moderate temperature. The ground possessed of qualities directly opposite to those mentioned above is the worst, and that which has a mixed nature is of the middling quality. [1]

The site to be avoided is described in a special manner as follows:—That which has the form of a circle, or a semicircle, or containing three, five or six angles, or resembling a trident or shaped like the back of a fish, the back of an elephant, or a turtle, or the face of a cow, etc., situated opposite to any of the intermediate quarters abounding with human skulls, stones or worms, ant-hills, bones, slimy earth, decayed wood, coals, dilapidated wells, subterraneous pits, fragments of tiles, limestones, ashes, husks of corns and exposed to the wafted effluvia of curds, oil, honey, dead bodies, and fishes; such a spot should be avoided on every account.

In regard to colour and taste, ground with smell like that of ghee and with sweet taste is good for Brahmans; that with the colour and smell of blood and with an astringent taste, for Kshatriyas; that with yellow colour, smell of boiled rice and bitter taste, for Vaisyas: and that with dark colour, smell of toddy and taste of cow-dung, for Sudras.

There is also a test for the selection of a site by lighting a lamp in a hole. A hole measuring one cubit in depth,

1. Ramraz's essay on the architecture of the Hindus, London, pp. 15-23.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

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351 having been well plastered with mud, a saucer of unbaked
823 earth filled with ghee and four lighted wicks is placed therein,
372 for testing the quality of the soil. If the wicks burn brightly
[524] in all four directions, the ground is fit for all the castes including Brahmans and other caste-men. If the wicks do not burn, it will not suit any of the four castes.

342 If the house is constructed by a person in the month of
804 Auspicious times for the construction of houses. Medam (April-May) he gets disease: in
777 Edavam (May-June) he gets money and
822 jewel: in Mithunam (June-July) there will be death: in Ashad or Karkadakam (July-August) he gets servants and jewels, but no beasts; in Chingam (August-September) friendship; in Kanni (September-October) loss of friends; in Thulam (October-November) death of his wife; in Vrischigam (November-December) money and crops; in Dhanu (December-January) he will become a devotee; in Makaram (January-February) there will be fear from enemies and thieves, but the builder will know of profits from many directions: in Kumbham (February-March), danger of fires; in Meenam (March-April) gold and sons.

The following asterisms are auspicious for commencing a building:—Aswini, Rohini, Mulam, the three Uttaras, Mrigasirsha, Swathi, Hasta, Anuradha. All days of the week, except Sunday and Tuesday, are auspicious. A house should be commenced at auspicious moments known as *muhurtas*: Sveda, Mitra, Mahendra, Gandharva, Rohini and also Raja Sävitra. The erection of the pillars should be performed at auspicious *lagnas*, moments when the sun and the moon are favourable; other moments should be avoided.

342 Building operations should not be commenced in the
777 Inauspicious times. rainy season nor at the end of the third part
821 of the dark fortnight, and in the first and second part of the bright fortnight. Of the phases of the moon, the fourth, ninth, and fourteenth should be avoided. Tuesday is also to be omitted; for working on that day brings injury or bad luck. Days marked with dangers natural or any other, arising out of the earth, sky, or heavenly bodies and other calamities, such as the death of a friend, and those made ominous by the influence of some planets are considered inauspicious. A well informed person should do his work when the moon and the stars are favourable.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
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Nayar

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The construction of a house on the left or back of a Vishnu 777
temple, on the right of a Siva or Durga temple, or by the right 778
side of a Sastha temple, will cause calamities to the occupants; 823
but that on the opposite side will bring prosperity.

Houses should not be constructed near temples, paddy flats, hermitages, the sea, hills, or cow-shed; if constructed near temples, they should be lower in height than the religious edifices.

Houses, constructed on a dry-land (*paramba*) with an elevation to the north-west, will last for eighteen years; and if on an elevation towards the east, south and south-east, a hundred years; if, however, they are built on a ground with an elevation to the north-east, they will last for a thousand, if to the west, twelve years, and to the north, eight years. Houses built on grounds sloping to the north with *athi* (Ficus racemosa) near them, those sloping to the east with *arayal* (Ficus religiosa) growing thereon, those with an inclination to the west, with Peràl (Ficus Indica) growing thereon, and grounds with *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) are fit for the occupation of the members of the four castes.

The following trees, namely, *elanni* (Mimusops Elangi, 824
or *perál* (Ficus Indica) growing on the eastern side of a house, 342
athi (Ficus racemosa) or *puli* (Tamarindus Indica) on the 351
southern side, *arayal* (Ficus religiosa), *pala* (Echites scholaris) 823
or milk plant on the west, *nāgc* tree (Trichosanthes anguina) and *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) on the north, will bring prosperity to the occupants. Jack and mango trees cocoanut and areca palms may grow on all sides of a house. *Arayál* (Ficus religiosa) growing on the eastern side of a house will cause it to take fire, while *perál* on the western side will give cause for fear from enemies. *Athi* on the northern side of the house will bring on abdominal complaints to the occupants. *Arayal* growing near a house must be cut off, unless the distance between the house and the tree be twice the height of the latter. A cow-shed may be erected either to the [343]
east or the west of the main building; and a similar one to the south of it for bullocks and buffaloes. There are certain ceremonies performed both at the commencement of construction and at its various stages, as well as before the occupation of a house, a detailed description of which will be found in the account of the Brahmans. [1]

1. Chandrika.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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Nayar

764
[804]s performed. All the members of the family take part in this [793]ceremony under the direction of the priest who belongs to the *Athikurussi* class. The ceremony consists in filling up three [564]*para* measures with paddy and one *edangali* of raw rice, and placing them near the corpse together with a burning lamp of local manufacture.

[351] A mango tree is cut, and as much fuel as is necessary for the burning of the dead is collected and placed at the south-eastern corner of the compound which is always set apart for the burning or burial of the dead. A small pit about the size of the dead body is dug. Across this are placed three long stumps of the plantain tree, one at each end and one in the middle, and on these the foundation of the pyre is laid. The dead body which is placed on a bamboo bier is carried to the cremation ground and placed on the pyre with its head to the south, then fuel is laid over it, together with a little camphor, 613 sandal-wood and ghee, if the family can afford the expense. Be-764 fore the body is placed on the pyre, the *anandaravan*, the member of the family immediately junior to the deceased, tears from the new cloths laid on the corpse, a piece sufficient to go round his own loins. He wears it round his waist and holds in his hand or tucks into his cloth at the waist, a piece of iron, generally a long key. It must be noted here, that all those members of the family who are older than the deceased may not take any part whatsoever in the funeral ceremony or in any subsequent ceremony after the cremation or burial, but all adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the [593]pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or in his [604]absence, his nephew (sister's son), sets fire to the pyre beginning at the head of the corpse; but if a son is left by the deceased, he sets fire to the pyre beginning at the feet. In the case of a woman, the son has to set fire to the pyre, or in his absence, one junior in age to her has the right to do so. It is a matter of great importance that the whole pyre should burn at once, and great care towards that end is taken. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the family go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound of a Nayar house). The eldest man who has the piece of cloth and the key carries a pot of water, and all return to the place of cremation. When the body is almost consumed by fire, the senior member carries the pot of water thrice round it, letting

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Ghats, the height of which varies between five and over eight thousand feet.

Before 1957, when the new State of Kerala came into being with the reorganization of the Indian States, the area included the large Madras district of Malabar, the French possession of Mahe, and the princely State of Cochin amalgamated with that of Travancore. The respective capitals were Calicut (today Kozhikode), Ernakulam, and Trivandrum, the French possession being limited to the town bearing the same name as itself.

All rivers in Kerala, except those of the more elevated taluk of the Wynaad, run from east to west, cutting the coastal strip into sections. Inland, however, vast stretches of practically stagnant water, comparable to lagoons, known locally under the name of backwaters, extend down the whole length of the State, affording uninterrupted communication.

Geologically, Kerala is a low tableland of red laterite and clay, fringed by a coast of alluvial formation. Laterite, from the name given to it by Dr Buchanan in 1800, is really a soil of decomposed gneiss, from which the Western Ghats are made. When dug up and left to the action of sun and rain, only the skeleton of hard material remains, sponge-like in appearance, from which blocks of building material are cut. It is not very resistant or long-lived, and gradually disintegrates into a red type of gravel, more or less finely granulated.

The resultant soil or loam is a well-balanced mixture of clay and sand, admittedly poor in organic matter, but well-suited to the special types of crops which have given Kerala its wealth. Thus rice, coconuts, pepper and betel, arecanuts, jack fruits, mangoes and cashews, do extraordinarily well in it, helped as they are by the damp, warm climate constant throughout the year. There are two monsoons in Kerala, the south-west monsoon of the summer, which is the principal one, and the north-west monsoon of the autumn which, lately, often fails.

In appearance, the landscape of Kerala varies very little from the coastal line to the towering peaks of the Western Ghats. Along the beach of fine sand, coconut trees in an unending perspective, raise their gently waving palm leaves in a manner reminiscent of the South Seas and of Ceylon. Jack fruit trees and mangoes behind them, being of a darker coloured foliage, give depth to the romantic scene. It is among these that the houses of the inhabitants of Kerala are to be found. Unlike the rest of India, human habitations are not grouped together here in villages and towns. Each stands isolated from its neighbours, in a garden-like compound surrounded by a stout fence of brambles or o

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thorns and planted with big-leaved plantains, flowering bushes such as the hibiscus, and tall, slender arecanut palms, their graceful, shining trunks entwined with betel and pepper creepers. Here and there, a red tiled roof denotes the dwelling of some high-caste person, while elsewhere, the thatched roofs of the ordinary houses reveal the low social status of the majority.

Red laterite dust roads criss-cross this green scenery, highways and lesser paths upon which a continual stream of men and women, scantily clad in white, are forever on the move. Dry river beds in the spring and swollen, muddy torrents in the monsoon season, are crossed together with the broad expanse of calm, smooth backwaters on the way east to the inland red laterite hills. It is here that the majority of the terraced paddy fields are met with, green and flooded in the summer and dried up, with tufts of yellow straw stalks the rest of the year, their fringes strewn with rustling, restless coconut trees.

2. MYTHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Hindu Brahmin tradition has it, so I heard from my informants in this region, that Kerala (*Malayalam* or *Keralabhumi* as it is called in the *Keralolpatti* and *Kerala Mahatmyam* chronicles) was created from the sea by Parasu Raman, the axe-wielding avatar of the god Vishnu, and given to those Brahmins called Nambudri for their perpetual possession and enjoyment. The myth, to which even the modern Hindu inhabitants of Kerala subscribe, is no doubt symbolic of two things: the geological origin of the land at the foot of the Ghats, which appears really to have been uncovered from the sea in some ancient natural upheaval, and the colonization of Kerala by Aryan invaders from the north in a remote and ill-defined past.

The mythological tale, in detail, is that Parasu Raman was once ordered by his father to kill his mother, because the latter had been seen by her husband smiling at a youth when she was fetching water at the well. The son, in filial obedience to his father, carried out the order, but having done so, attempted in every possible way to atone for the abominable crime of matricide. He consulted Brahmins who requested of him that he exterminate twenty two generations of the rival warrior caste of Kshattryas. This he did, but the Brahmins were not satisfied. Parasu Raman then climbed the Western Ghats and, from the highest point, cast his axe into the sea calling upon it to withdraw, which it did. The land of Kerala thus came into existence and Vishnu's avatar, the

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Nayars

*595 I was in that town for only a very short time. I shall begin by giving a description of the little remaining Nayar polyandry that I was able to find.

114 *595 Research, in this case, was the very opposite of easy. When I was in Ottappalam of the Walluvanad taluk in 1949, and had made that town the centre of my activities, all the influential local Nayars, most of them *wakils* or lawyers, got together and, threatening the severest punishments if anyone disobeyed them, decided that none of their caste would give me any information at all regarding their alleged polyandry. The town is one from which many of the most prominent Nayars in Government service in New Delhi today have originally come, and in which members of their *tarawads* and immediate families still live. It is therefore understandable that they should have taken this line, it being considered by them today that any hint of their being polyandrous is insulting and degrading. Later, I heard that I had been accused in the Indian capital of stating that Nayars were descendants of the most primitive aboriginals. There was, naturally, absolutely no truth in this, but it is easy to see how the rumour originated.

*595 On the 28th of August, 1939, I went to a Nayar household which I have marked down in my notes as bearing the name of Tsingepuram [351] Kailott. It was in the outskirts of Tellicherry, a large house in a garden compound, with a smaller building some distance away from it. There I met a man called Apunayar and his brother Kamarnayar, and the latter who seemed to be the most talkative, told me through my interpreter that he was the youngest of the two, while his brother, the other man, was the eldest of the whole family. There were four brothers, he explained, the two other ones, junior to this pair, lived in the smaller house in the compound: their names were Kunjiramanayar and Narayannayar. Their mother, Amalu of Tsingepuram kailott *tarawad* had recently died. She had been polyandrous, and the four brothers and a daughter who was also dead now had been born and brought up in the big house by their maternal uncles. The latter had died before their [928] mother, and they had inherited the property. They had given up polyandry and now lived each of them with a wife. Households had been split, and the younger brothers had built themselves the smaller house in the garden, and lived there with their respective wives, while the two elder men had remained in the ancestral mansion. Apunayar had four children, two boys and two girls, Karanayar one girl, while in the smaller household, there were only a little boy and a little girl, both the children of Narayannayar.

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Tiyas
Thandans

*595 [114] With the Thandans and the Tiyas (Tiyyas) of north Cochin, there were happily none of these difficulties, and I was able to study them at my ease. On the 23rd of July, 1939, I paid my first visit to Kerala when I drove to Palghat from Ootacamund in the Nilgiris and went to a Tiya house in Lakkidi in Walluvanad with an interpreter. The Tiyas we met that day were two men, brothers, who shared a wife. When we entered the yard of their broken-down palm leaf house, she was sitting bare-breasted, suckling a little boy whom she told us was hers. The [611] two men, whose names I did not ascertain, told us that they followed *marumakkathayam*, which was surprising. In those days, I knew too little about Kerala to ask them if they came from north Malabar, as they probably did. But I have since heard from a blacksmith family which I visited at the same place on the 12th of November 1949, that they had indeed come from north Malabar, and that this was the reason why they were matrilineal. Their polyandry, on the other hand, was correlated with the economic plight in which they found themselves, and they had taken to it because it was the customary way to solve such difficulties with their fellows of the same caste in the south. They had no property and told us that they worked as paid labourers. For the house, they [920] paid four annas a year to a local Brahmin landlord. They said, nevertheless, that polyandry was dying out and that the Nayars, for instance, did not practise it any longer. Theirs was obviously a sporadic instance of a matrilineal Tiya family from north Malabar in which the wife was being shared by two brothers in a south Malabar taluk, where fraternal polyandry prevails. It would be unwise to make any generalizations from this as it was, I think, quite an exceptional and probably isolated case.

On the 25th and 26th of October 1949, together with my interpreters, I visited a large Thandan household, about two miles east of Ottappalam. The family living there were called Appayl Watakkeh, and they ● [351] belonged to the Appayl *tarawad*. The buildings in the compound consisted of one large mansion with a courtyard in front, at the end of which was a smaller house. Cattle and some dogs roamed about in the courtyard, where paddy was also drying. In the background, the green [342] plantain, papaya and areca nut palms, contrasted sharply with the red soil and the laterite stones from which the houses were built, and the soaring trunks of tall coconut trees stood out, here and there.

*595 115 We met the *karanavan*, called Raman, a man of forty eight, wearing only a piece of cotton from the waist down. He was wrinkled and partly bald, but very amiable and helpful when it came to questioning him. [551] On the first day, we spoke in general terms to him about the Thandan

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Tiyas
Thandans

to the four eldest boys to begin with. That was twenty seven years ago, and she was forty six now. Innayakkan, the last husband, had joined his brothers later, when he was twelve and with their consent, but there had been no ceremony. 595* 601

Very soon after this, Iyyer, the third husband, finding conditions too difficult in Kerala, did what many Tiyas had done since time immemorial; he emigrated to Ceylon, where he worked as a railway coolie. Kalyany had remained with Koppan, Pangoda, Ponan and Innayakkan, and she had had five children by them. Then Ponan died of tuberculosis, ten years after the wedding, aged twenty five. Fifteen years ago, the two eldest men had also left for Ceylon and sent Iyyer back to look after their wife. He had returned, had taken up his former profession of toddy tapping, and was her only real husband now. She had had three more children by him, Balakrishnan was the second and the only boy. There had been no news at all of Koppan and Pangoda, and she presumed that they were dead. Inayakkan had run away from home some time back and had never been heard of again; he was also presumed dead. With Iyyer and herself lived Kesheran, her second son, two unmarried girls and the three last children. Work was still scarce, and pay meagre, so that Aiyappan, the eldest, had gone to Kozhikode (Calicut) in order to try and gain employment. His brother, Padmanapan, had done the same, but he had gone to Madras, on the east coast. She had been trying to help Balakrishnan find work all day: yesterday he had been given a job as a coolie, but today, he was unemployed. [464] [167] [464] [166]

Kalyany told me that she was related to the brothers of the Katukulangara *tarawad* whom I had interviewed at Kadavelur on the 27th of October. She was a half sister of Velu by another mother. I found this family particularly interesting, because it illustrated, more than any other Tiya one encountered so far, the ancient and persistant connection which the caste has with Ceylon. Their genealogy is given in Table 8.

Before going on to an account of my visits to Kammalans and other artisan families practising polyandry in Kerala, I would like to give here, together with the material that I collected about Tiyas, the description of a Thandan family that I went to see on the 25th of November 1949. 595*

They lived in a large house, standing in a big garden of coconut trees, arecanut palms, plantains and jacks. It was situated at the cross-roads of the Nilambur valley track and the highway to Pattambi, quite close to Shoranur. [351] [361]

I began by interviewing the matriarch of the household, an old lady of eighty, called Kali, the widow of five husbands. The household and [601]

[Text Continues on P. 191]

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Kammalans

union with Kurumba. They were not the only ones following the custom in the family, as their sister, Paru, now dead, had also had two husbands, the brothers Aiyappan and Narayan of the Vetukatukundu *tarawad*. She had died in childbirth, when her little boy was born; the child died too. Nilu, their youngest sister, had also died giving birth to a boy, her first-born, who did not survive either. Of what Narayani, the next youngest sister, had died, was not clear, but it had been after she had given birth to a little girl who was still alive. Of their children, the eldest, a boy called Kunju, and his sister, the eldest but one and bearing the name of Kunji, had married a brother and sister of a neighbouring *tarawad* called Putanparekil; there had been no marriage between cross-cousins. They did, however, say that this was the best form of union, as the Thandans had said. The genealogy of the family is given in Table 11.

I have described how, previously, we went into the other compound, where the Tiyas of 1939 used to live, to question the family of blacksmiths about their polyandry. This sub-caste of the Kammalans is called *Karuwan* or *Perinkollan* and they, too, are not a wealthy class. These lived only a few years from the Thatan household just described, and their dwelling was very similar to the other. The yard of the thatched house had blacksmith's instruments lying about it, which showed at once who lived there.

We met and interviewed a man called Ittenam, aged fifty five, whose brother, Poreyn, with whom he used to share a common wife, Paru, was now dead. He was a widower, and lived with his sons, Raman and Kunyuni, twenty two and twenty years old, who were present at our talk. Their common wife, Nani, twenty, was also there, a little baby boy on her hip, and the two other women with her were her sister-in-law, Narayani, twenty four, who was the wife of both her brothers and also the sister of her two husbands, and Kunji, the thirty six year old elder sister of Narayani, Raman and Kunyuni. A picture of her is given in Fig. 12; she was here on a visit, as her household was elsewhere. All the women, except Kunji, were bare-breasted, and, when they were not suckling the babies on their hips, milk ran down onto their abdomens from their naked breasts. Itteenam's elder sister, Unuli, was alive, aged sixty one, but she was married and had her home elsewhere with her husband, Narayan.

When I made the genealogy of this household, I found that its name was Mudrikkelparampil. The *tarawad* was similarly named and was exogamous together with the *kiriyam*, as was to be expected. *Makka-*

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 197]

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Kammalans

kiriyam; in that matrilineal descent group they limit themselves to not marrying those of their acquaintances whom they know belong to it. The sub-caste is also endogamous, carpenter only marrying "carpentress", and never a *Puri-asari*. Normally, boys alone can inherit the property, but if there are no male heirs, the girls, even if they are married, will inherit equal shares.

The members of the Perinkulam household were subtenants of a Nayar tenant called Mutad Achutah Nayar, himself the *verumpattamdar* of a Nayar *janmi* from Kavalappaia near Shoranur called Kavalappaia Mupil Nayar. As *kudiyiruppu* tenants of the site where the house was built, they paid a yearly rent of only one rupee.

On the 17th of November, 1949, I visited the house of a member of the fourth and last sub-caste of the Kammalans, the *Musari* (often pronounced *Mushari*), bell-metal (an alloy of lead and brass) smiths or braziers. It was near Lakkidi in the Walluvanad taluk, one furlong north of the main road, and to reach it, my interpreters and I followed a very attractive path, sunk deep between high banks of earth and overshadowed with coconut and arecanut palm trees.

We arrived at a miserable house, standing in a grove of palms and plantains, a red laterite courtyard in front, in which could be seen some stone moulds in grooves – no doubt the foundry. There was nobody about, but when we called out, a little girl (whom we later heard was called Menakhi) appeared and said that she would go and fetch her father. He arrived soon afterwards, a big, strong man, fifty years old, called Krishnan. He wore his hair over his forehead in the typical Malayalam top knot, and he had a very ugly face.

The name of the household, he told us, was Puawutterparamba and it belonged to the Chelamanaparamba *tarawad*. Our informant was the youngest brother of three, and there was a sister called Kali, aged forty nine, about whom, however, he could tell us nothing at all. The whole family used to live, it seemed, at a place called Nedungothani, near Palappuram. That was their village, he said. But then, the elder brother, Konnan, now sixty five years old, had got married some thirty years ago to a woman named Sita whom he had met while "roaming about". He had married late as a result of this proclivity for wandering away from home, and, with his bride, aged fifty today (Krishnan could not tell us the name of her *tarawad*), he had moved to Wallancheri, near Kutipuram, Pattambi, because he had found business bad in Nedungothani. He was still living in Wallancheri and had five children, of whom four were married, the two daughters away to men of other vil-

[I.e. in the carpenter sub-caste of the Kammalans -- Analyst]

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Kammalans
Kolla-kurups

and boys had preference over girls in this matter, but the latter could inherit if there were no male heirs.

The plot of land upon which the house was built was leased to the family as a sort of *kudiyiruppu*. It cannot be called a fully orthodox one, since Krishnan said that he had paid fifty rupees to the former resident, a coolie of the Ertachan caste (low caste Nayar), twenty three years ago when he took over from him, and another fifty rupees to the *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin called Manjalata Nambudri. Since then, rent had been fixed at eight annas and six pies a year, but he had not paid it for the last two years, he said, because nobody had asked him to do so! He made his living all right as a brazier, although it was not a very lucrative profession.

Having been to polyandrous families of the four sub-castes of the Kammalans, I next went on to investigate the polyandry of their associated artisan sub-castes, of which six were reliably reported to practise it. I began with the *Kolla-kurups* or shampooers, masseurs and leather shield makers. To these are assimilated also the *Vil-kurups* or bow makers, but I did not have the opportunity to see any. There are a subdivision of the main sub-caste, on the basis of speciality, as the *Puri-asari* are of the regular *Asari*.

On the 20th of November, 1949, I went to the house of a *Kolla-kurup* near Palappuram. This town is on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, east of Ottappalam, just before reaching the cross-roads of Lakkidi. We left the car on the highway, and proceeded on foot to the south of it, along a narrow, winding path which took us past luscious, green paddy fields lined with coconut trees, to a largish house, built of clay and laterite but thatched in the usual way, standing on an elevated piece of ground, like a platform. There was a gate to pass through, and as we went in we saw members of the family sitting about on a kind of rough, dried-clay verandah running round the walls of the building.

There were quite a lot of them, and they were all very gay and noisy. They started singing at the sight of us, and, laughing and shouting, made a considerable fuss of us. The contrast to the rather dismal atmosphere of the other houses that we had visited was very marked. After my guides and interpreters had somewhat quietened the children, we managed to speak to a man called Shankaran, aged thirty six, who was the eldest living male member of the family's second generation. With him were his wife and children, as well as his twenty five year old sister, Kalyany. None of the people wore anything from the waist upwards, and only a piece of cotton cloth covered the lower part of their bodies.

[Text continues on P. 206]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kanisans
Manans

564 siums" too – for what reason, I could not find out; I could see no rela-
614 tion between astrology and a gymnasium. Like the *Kolla-kurups*, they
also had *kiriyams* which were exogamous as the *kalarikels* were; the
[428] informant's matrilineal clan was called Manga. Inheritance was *mak-*
kathayam.

* 595 The family living in the house here, was divided into two sections.
60] The first, of which Ramankuti was the eldest, consisted of himself and
his brother, Ticheri, three years younger than him. Their father, who
was now dead, had successively had two wives, Lakshmi and Kalyany,
both of them still alive and living in the house; the first section was des-
cendant from the first wife, while the other was issued from the second.
Kalyany had had six children, of which, Paru, aged thirty, was the eldest;
there were four brothers, Pachu, Shanghuni, Kumaran and Gopalkrish-
nan, and a younger daughter called Nani, aged twelve. The interesting
part of the organization was that the two sections had both contracted
polyandrous marriages: Ramankuti and Ticheri with one wife, Madhevi
aged twenty eight: their four half brothers with Devaki, twenty three
years old. Both women were from other *kalarikels*, the first from Kan-
gal and the other from Kavalapara. They all lived in the same house,
however, with Nani, only Paru having married Krishnan of Kutiparli
kalarikel and having gone off to live with him. Paru had three children
with Krishnan, as did Madhevi with the informant and his brother. The
four brothers had only one little daughter, aged one year, with Devaki.
The genealogy, as it was dictated to me, is given in Table 16.

* 595 Ramankuti told me that he and Pachu were the fully-fledged astrol-
[191] ogers of the family. Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan were studying the art.
Ticheri did odd jobs as a labourer, and Shanghuni was employed as a
[429] workman in the local match factory. The house that they all lived in
was rented on a *kudiviruppu* lease for which they paid eight annas a
year to the *janmi* of the land upon which it stood, a Nambudri Brahmin
called Totapai Mana Nilakanda Nambudripad.

564 On the 22nd of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi to visit the house
[296] of a *Manan*. These people are washermen and barbers, and they play
[305] an important role in Kerala as it is they and they alone who can wash
[535] the polluted clothes of menstruating Nambudri Brahmin and Nayar
women. But they are also dancers in the temple on festive occasions.

361 We found the house for which we were looking, in the actual village
● 351 of Lakkidi, in the vicinity of the railway station, near the river. It was
a moderately large, well-to-do building, standing isolated in a large
compound, in which clothes had been laid out to dry on the ground.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 210]

13;Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

persons who have died of cholera or small-pox. When preparations for the funeral have been made, the corpse is removed to the natumuttam or central yard of the house, if there is one (there always is in the larger houses); and, if there is not, is taken to the front yard, where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with sandal paste and ashes as in life, and it is neatly clothed. There is then done what is called the potavekkuka ceremony, or placing new cotton cloths (kōti mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the deceased's taravād followed by all the other members, and also the sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives. These cloths are used for tying up the corpse, when being taken to the place of burial or cremation. In some parts of Malabar, the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is carried, well covered in the cloths, by hand. In either case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is removed, there is done another ceremony called pāra-virakkuka, or filling up pāras. (A pāra is a measure nearly as big as a gallon.) All adult male members of the taravād take part in it under the direction of a man of the Attikkurissi clan who occupies the position of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen days, receiving as his perquisites all the rice and other offerings made to the deceased's spirit. It consists in filling up three pára measures with paddy (unhusked rice), and one edangāli ($\frac{1}{10}$ of a pāra) with raw rice. These offerings of paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a burning lamp of the kind commonly used in Malabar, called nela vilaku. If the taravād is rich enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the corpse before its removal for cremation.

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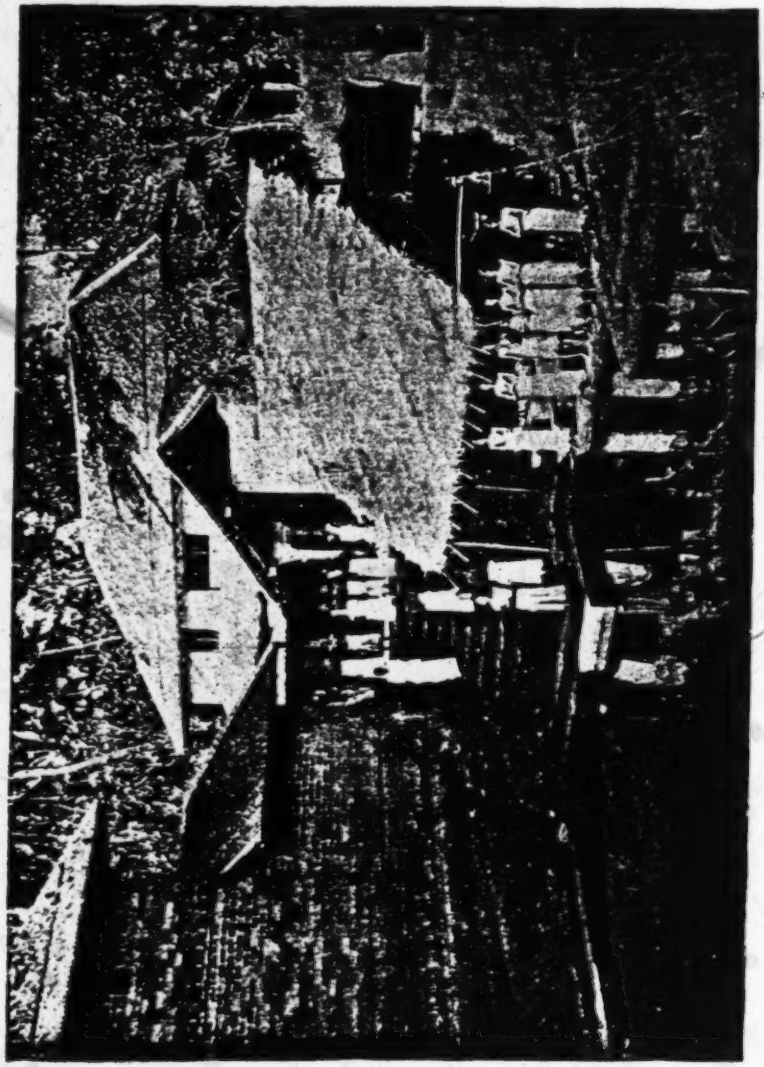
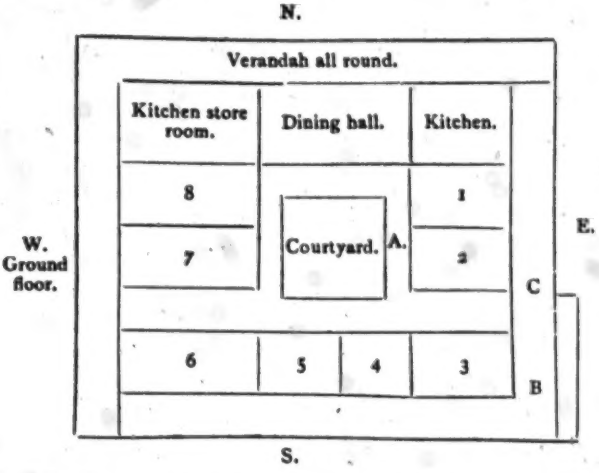


NAYAR HOUSE.

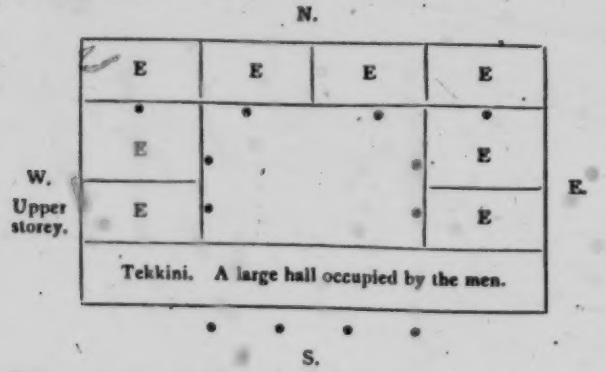
[facing P. 361]

342
[823] west, never north or south; as a rule, it faces the east. Every garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing
● 351 of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, in the case of the poorest houses, a small portico or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this;
[184] there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the
342 Nâyars. The following is a plan of a nâlapura or four-
556 sided house, which may be taken as representative of the houses of the rich :—



Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms, which are generally used for storing grain. At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper storey occupied by the female members of the family. At B is another staircase leading to the rooms of the upper storey occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portions allotted to the men and women. No. 8 is for
[532] the family gods. The Karanavans and old women of
[613] the family are perpetuated in images of gold or silver,
[735] or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, who cannot

afford to have these images made, substitute a stone. [532] Offerings are made to these images, or to the stones at [613] every full moon. The throat of a fowl will be cut outside, [735] and the bird is then taken inside and offered. The [782] entrance is at C.



There are windows at * * *. E are rooms occupied by women and children. It may be noticed that the [513] apartment where the men sleep has no windows on the side of the house which is occupied by women. The latter are relatively free from control by the men as to who may visit them. We saw, when speaking of funeral [351] ceremonies, that a house is supposed to have a court-yard, and, of course, it has this only when there are four sides to the house. The nālapura is the proper form of house, for in this alone can all ceremonial be observed in orthodox fashion. But it is not the 342 ordinary Nāyar's house that one sees all over Malabar.

The ordinary house is roughly of the shape here indicated. Invariably there is an upper storey. There are no doors, and only a few tiny windows opening to the west. Men sleep at one end, women [513] at the other, each having their own staircase. Around the house there is

342 always shade from the many trees and palms. Every house is in its own seclusion."

Concerning Nāyar dwellings, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the houses of the Nāyar, standing in a separate compound, have been by many writers supposed to have been designed with special reference to the requirements of offence and defence, and Major Welsh states that the saying that every man's house is [244] his castle is well verified here. The higher ambition of the Nāyar is, as has frequently been said, to possess a garden, wherein he can grow, without trouble or expense, the few necessaries of his existence. The garden surrounding the house is surrounded by a hedge or strong fence. At the entrance is an out-house, or patipura, which must have served as a kind of guard-[356] room in mediæval times. In poorer houses its place is [239] taken by a roofed door, generally provided with a stile [532] to keep out cattle. The courtyard is washed with cow-dung, and diverse figures are drawn with white chalk 346 on the fence. Usually there are three out-houses, a [343] vadakkettu on the north side serving as a kitchen, a cattle-shed, and a tekketu on the southern side, where [164] some family spirit is located. These are generally those of Maruta, *i.e.*, some member of the family who has died of small-pox. A sword or other weapon, and a seat or other emblem is located within this out-house, which is also known by the names of gurusala (the house of a saint), kalari (military training-ground), and daivappura [782] (house of a deity). The tekketu is lighted up every evening, and periodical offerings are made to propitiate 351 the deities enshrined within. In the south-west corner [312] is the serpent kavu (grove), and by its side a tank for [245] bathing purposes. Various useful trees are grown in the garden, such as the jack, areca palm, cocoanut, plantain, tamarind and mango.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
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234 [804] castes very rarely use these products. The cows too are not brought up on a scientific basis, and are consequently of a weak build and generally yield from 4 nalis * to 6 or 8 nalis of milk per day.†

Male buffaloes are used in ploughing and sometimes to draw loaded carts. These too are of weak build.

Cow buffaloes are used mostly for milking, but sometimes in ploughing. The milk they yield is greater in quantity but inferior in quality to that of the cows.‡

231 Very little care is taken of the young of the above species. The young calf or calf-buffalo is not usually reared with the object of getting strong or vigorous oxen or buffaloes, but allowed to grow haphazardly. Some die off young, and especially the buffalo-calf since the buffalo can be milked without its young and not so the cows.§ The official figures in this respect (vide above) are instructive. The usual practice is to buy cows or buffaloes from a fair for milking purposes and to dispose of them, buffaloes especially, unless needed for ploughing, when the milk dries up.

The only use to which the horse is put is to drive jutkas, but as jutkas are rare in this village, horses are seldom seen here.

Donkeys and mules too are few.

Sheep and goats are used for their mutton which is in demand among the lower castes, but more for their milk, which is considered to be medicinal.

Pigs are reared for their flesh by the local Christians; the Muhammadans consider it to be a sacrilege even to utter the name.

Cows, oxen and buffaloes are made to stand in stalls, two or more being allowed to be in the same stall. Bundles of rice straw form the chief food, but green grass is used during the rainy season. Rice dust and poonac (copra from which the oil has been extracted) mixed in water is given. Cows are let loose during the daytime under care of a keeper to feed in the fields or near the hills.

241 237 Cattle-dung mixed with cattle urine is used as manure in the paddy fields. This is scattered in the fields during the hot season (April-May). The percentage of cattle-dung will approximately be 25 per cent of the total manure used. Dung is also used as fuel. Women are becoming averse to making varatties and use more wood.

Sheep dung is sometimes used.

241 But green manure consisting of leaves of certain plants and trees is scattered in the fields after they have been well ploughed in the first fall of the monsoon rains. Green manure is never grown, but is obtained from the neighbouring hills.

351 Every house without exception has a compound big or small surrounding it in which there are coconut palms, arecanut palms, mango trees, jack fruit trees, plantains, etc., and sometimes pepper. During the hot months (March-April-May) vegetables

* [1 nali (nari or nazhi) = ¼ of a Madras measure and very nearly = 9 fluid ounces or nearly half a pint.—Ed.]

† I.e., one or two quarts of milk per day. A Madras cow yields up to five quarts per day.

‡ [I.e., it is less valued. Buffalo's milk is very rich.—Ed.]

§ [It is a fact that an Indian cow refuses to give milk without the calf. If the calf dies the dairyman stuffs the skin and makes an imitation calf. This serves the purposes. —Ed.]

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351 useful for cookery are watered and grown in the compound itself; while during the rains also vegetables are grown, such as brinjals, lady's fingers, pumpkins, peas, etc. During summer the trees and vegetables in the compound are watered from the well which is a special feature of every house.

242 *Insect-pests.*—The *caterpillars* of certain moths ate away this year (1916) the tender blades of the paddy as soon as they cropped up from underground. This appeared at the beginning of the sowing season (May) and lasted for a week or two. Farmers here say that these have not appeared for years past. When I wrote to the Agricultural Superintendent of the State at Trichur he suggested the following remedy: "Dig a trench ½ foot wide by 1½ feet deep along the four sides of a field where these insects would fall in their travel from field to field, but would not be able to get out of it."

A kind of fly or flea is said to eat away the juice of the rice at the stalk of the paddy as soon as it reaches the milk stage.

232 *Cattle diseases.*—Sore feet. The feet are well washed with hot water, and turpentine, teak-oil, or cashewnut oil is smeared in the sore; the animal is also made to stand in a muddy place into which the leaves of a certain tree are strewn.

Mouth disease. Pig-ghee or bear-ghee is smeared on the tongue.

Swelling in the belly. The animal without any apparent cause falls down and dies. No medicine is applied in such cases.

Malignant sore-throat and cow-pox are also common.

[654] An Agricultural Department for the State has been established recently at Trichur with a model farm attached to it. The present Superintendent is an England-returned Cochinite. Help is often derived from here, but the farmers themselves are shrewd in practical agriculture.

313 *Timber.*—Wood for fuel, implements, buildings, etc., is obtained from the neighbouring hills and forests. The taluk of Talapilli is full of forests especially on the eastern side. Nearly 43 per cent of the area of the State is forest and its timber is even exported to foreign parts. The Forest Department is a source of income to the State.

[482] Coolies carry faggots of fuel on their heads from the neighbouring hills for sale; sometimes the people get cart-loads; a decent [135] head-load now costs nearly 4 annas and a cart-load from Rs. 2-8-0 to Rs. 3; prices were much lower a few years back. A full head-load is divided into smaller bundles before being sold, and a woman may get six or eight annas for a bundle as heavy as she can carry.

Durable building materials are got from the forests and timber depots, but mango-planks, bamboos and jack-tree planks are also used.

342 *Houses.*—Houses are not built in rows. Every house is surrounded by a compound hedged round by bamboo. Such compounds are intersected by lanes. Rice-straw is used in thatching houses; tiles are replacing thatch but the majority of houses still are thatched. No terraced houses can be seen in these parts where the monsoon rains pour down with full force.

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use. No other manure is used. Green manure is not grown but is got from somewhere or other according to circumstances. Varatties are not made. Wood fuel is the only sort used. 241 [372]

Insect pests.—Of these, the most ruinous is the "Chazhi" the terror of the ryot. The chazhi is a small insect of the locust species half an inch long which in millions appear in a few seasons and spread desolation in the paddy fields. Two remedies are current against this pestilence: (1) catching them directly by drawing a cloth (which serves the purpose of a net) attached to two handsticks over the crops and thus killing them; (2) but by far the most efficacious remedy in the estimation of the cultivator is the putting of a talisman in the fields which a local conjurer (Mandravadi) has prepared for him. What chazhi is to paddy "Mahali" is to the arecanut, the only difference being that in this case nothing is believed to be possible to combat the calamity. 242 [789]

Cattle diseases are (1) hoof disease, (2) Koraladappan (swelling in the neck), (3) Thada (mumps), (4) obstruction of urine and dung, (5) sudden epileptic attacks, and other diseases whose causes and cure are unknown to the peasant. Poisoning is sometimes done by Paraiyas of neighbouring desams for the sake of getting the flesh. For beef is eaten only by this lowest class and when cattle die they will be called to remove the carcase. A number of cattle are annually destroyed by tigers also which often venture into the sheds of the peasants. Talismans and offerings to deities are conceived to be the only remedy. 232 [789]

No assistance is obtained from the Agricultural department, nor any from any veterinary doctor.

Wood is commonly got for all uses from private trees; but the forest also supplies sometimes wood for small necessities. For building purposes, wood is purchased—not from any fixed place. 313

Houses.—The depressed castes have miserable hovels for their houses. A mud wall of five feet height with a ruined roof which can protect the inmate neither from sun nor rain is the order of the day. 342

Except the palatial family homes of the two jenmis, there are no tiled houses. Terracing is not customary here. All other houses are thatched, and thatching is always of straw.

Most houses have gardens surrounding them, where arecanut trees, plantains, mango trees, jack, etc., are grown. They are joyful to look at. 351

The maximum distance of cultivated lands from the home of cultivator is one mile.

An acre of land costs from Rs. 200 to Rs. 300. But purchases on jenmi tenure are worth above Rs. 500. But it is impossible to acquire jenmam property except for jenmis; for the jenmis are jealous guardians of their lands and never sell lands once acquired. Direct threatenings and indirect intimidation are used by them to obtain the jenmam right of lands if held by any lesser landowner. 423 [435]

Subsidiary industries.—Neither weaving nor spinning have ever been practised in this desam. 463

Other crafts—

1. Arrack and jaggery making.
2. Ironsmith.

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313 purchased from the nearest markets and brought in carts. Wood is getting dearer and dearer. It used to be very cheap.

The increase in price is due to the felling of trees without replanting, increased outside demand for fuel, as by the railway company and the Shoranur Tile Works; and the better appreciation and consequent increased demand for the local timber trees.

361 *The village.*—Strictly speaking there is no village-site. The houses are not built in street formation, but are scattered throughout the village. This is characteristic of most villages in Malabar and strongly contrasts with what obtains in other districts. The area of the village is 2,380 acres.

Localization of castes is not complete. Brahmans are located in the centre around the temple, with the Nayars, and the other higher castes surrounding them. The Thiyyas or Ezhuvas live farther apart and the depressed classes—Cherumas, Pariahs, etc.—live far out of the way of the higher castes on the outskirts of the village in hovels on hill sides, which are unfrequented by the other castes. Of course there are social prohibitions to their approaching the higher castes, much more to living near them.

342 There are a few fine houses: about 20 are tiled and have two storeys, about half of them belonging to the Brahmans. About 100 are one-storeyed thatched houses, almost exclusively owned by the castes. The rest are mere huts used by the poorer classes. There is no terraced house at all. Most of the houses are pretty old, but the tiled ones are mostly of recent construction. The houses are built more or less on a uniform plan and are often large without being convenient or comfortable.

The Pariahs and Cherumas live in thatched huts, miserable hovels one should call them, small, dark and exposed.

● 351 Almost every house has a 'garden' of some sort, with a few fruit trees like the coconut-palm, the mango tree, the jack tree, the areca-palm, plantain trees, etc. But very few houses have really good gardens. The gardens are watered from wells, which are found in every house. Whether there are fruit-trees on it or no, each house of the better class has a compound attached to it. This is sometimes used for growing kitchen vegetables.

361 The distance of cultivated lands from the home of the cultivator is never more than one mile. In the working season the ryot starts very early in the morning from his home with his oxen and agricultural implements so as to reach his land in time.

343 Field huts are almost unknown—except tiny watchmen's huts where watch is kept by a man at night when the crops are getting ready for harvest.

323 *Subsidiary industries—Potters.*—There are no weavers. There is a class of potters, of Telugu origin (as their language shows) engaged in making pots for household use, etc. They get the clay for their industry from the banks of the Bharata river (situated to the south of the village). Their wares find a ready market in the neighbouring villages, being very cheap and necessary. The lower castes cook in pots of burnt clay, while the better classes use bronze and other metals, such as copper. The art is the whole time employment of this class. But earnings are not very high, only just affording the means of subsistence. If the art is refined and improved to suit modern conditions and requirements it